

AUSTRALIA.

ADDRESS TO THE KING

ON THE SUBJECT OF

HOME RULE FOR IRELAND

AND THE REPLY THERETO.



Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty
October, 1906.



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No. 1.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

(Received August 20, 1906.)

MY LORD, Governor-General's Office, Melbourne, July 17, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a despatch, which has been addressed to me this day by my Prime Minister, covering an Address as a protest against the resolutions in favour of Home Rule, carried last year in both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament,* which I have been requested to transmit for presentation to His Majesty the King.

The address will be forwarded, under separate cover, at the earliest opportunity.

I have, &c.,

NORTHCOTE,

Governor-General.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Commonwealth of Australia, Prime Minister,

MY LORD, Melbourne, July 17, 1906.

THE Address to the King presented to Your Excellency for transmission to His Majesty, and remitted to me, consists of a protest against the resolutions in favour of Home Rule carried last year in both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. These resolutions were neither supported nor opposed by Your Government, some Ministers voting for, and others against them, according to their individual opinions.

The Address of the House of Representatives having been laid before the King, His Majesty was graciously pleased to command his Secretary of State for the Colonies to say that "His Majesty highly appreciates the loyal sentiments" which it contained.

Public criticism of the public acts of public men should, in my judgment, be free and unrestrained, nor should access to the throne, sought by any of His Majesty's subjects, be impeded, save upon constitutional grounds under circumstances of absolute necessity.

* See [Cd. 2821] March, 1906.

This Address, which consists of criticism of the action of the majorities who supported the resolutions referred to, having been properly presented to Your Excellency as the representative of the King in Australia, I beg to advise that it be transmitted to His Majesty.

I have, &c.,
ALFRED DEAKIN.

His Excellency
The Governor-General.

"THE AGE" (MELBOURNE).

Tuesday, July 17, 1906.

ANTI-HOME RULE PETITION.

PRESENTATION TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

LEGAL ADVICE SOUGHT.

The anti-Home Rule petition or address was handed to His Excellency the Governor-General at Government House yesterday by the central council for presentation to His Majesty the King. The petition contains 75,322 signatures of residents of Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and South Australia. A similar petition, containing 20,000 additional South Australian signatures, had not come to hand in time for yesterday's presentation, and this will be forwarded to His Excellency at the earliest opportunity. When His Excellency passes through Sydney on his way to Queensland this week the New South Wales petition, containing considerably over 20,000 signatures, will be presented. Yesterday's petition was packed in a box 2 feet 6 inches x 2 feet 6 inches x 12 inches. The petition is 1,450 yards in length, or about 300 yards short of a mile. The first four signatures to it are those of Archbishop Clarke, Mr. Knox, M.P., Archdeacon Hindley, and Mr. O. R. Snowball.

Mr. Knox, in presenting the address, said he regretted that in consequence of the short notice the whole of the Adelaide signatures had not come to hand, but they would be delivered as soon as received. So far as New South Wales was concerned, a separate petition was being prepared, and it would be presented in due course. They would have had a much larger demonstration at the ceremony that day but they had believed it would be His Excellency's pleasure that only members of the central council should attend.

His Excellency, in receiving the address, said it was a great honor for him to receive so important and representative a deputation. He could assure them he would look carefully at the petition. They would quite understand that as a matter of form he must give it brief examination, but he hoped to be able to send them an official letter the following day to say that in the event of his forwarding it, he would do so by the first outgoing mail steamer. He appreciated the importance of the subject, and he would give the matter consideration.

His Excellency will consult his advisers with reference to sending the address home, but this is a mere matter of form. The Prime Minister will advise that the Address should be forwarded. The Address is as follows:— [See below.]

Prior to yesterday's ceremony an interesting question arose as to the right of the petitioners to present the Address to the Governor-General in person. The central council, representing the petitioners, desired to adopt that course, and His Excellency at first believed that it was necessary for the address to reach him through his Ministers. His Excellency sought a legal opinion, and the petitioners consulted Mr. Harrison Moore, Professor of International Law at the University. Counsel found no bar in the Constitution to the adoption of the course desired by the petitioners, and yesterday's deputation was the result.

HOME RULE AND THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT.

NATIONAL PROTEST.

ADDRESS TO THE KING.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

WE, the undersigned men and women of Australia, your dutiful and loyal subjects, approach Your Majesty with assurances of our loyalty to your person and Government.

We have always regarded questions affecting the Parliamentary System of the United Kingdom as beyond the legitimate province of the Australian Legislature. We believe the Members of that body would keenly resent any such interference by the Imperial Parliament in questions affecting the constitution of the Commonwealth.

Both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament have passed by majority resolutions in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, and the House of Representatives has gone so far as to embody its resolutions in an Address to Your Majesty.

We desire to condemn in the strongest possible manner the conduct of both Houses.

The question of Home Rule for Ireland has never been discussed at any Federal or State election in this part of the world.

We firmly believe, and most respectfully submit, that sectarian bias or local political opportunism is largely responsible for the unauthorised action of the Federal Parliament.

We deplore the unwarrantable intrusion into the sphere of Australian politics of this burning question, which so bitterly divides the political parties of the Motherland.

We earnestly protest against the resolutions referred to, and beg to assure Your Majesty that they are not in accordance with the views of a vast majority of Australians.

With renewed assurances of our unwavering loyalty and devotion, and with fervent prayers for the stability and prosperity of the Empire,

We are,

Your Majesty's most faithful Subjects.

No. 2.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

MY LORD,

Downing Street, October 5, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's despatch of the 17th July, forwarding a letter from your Prime Minister on the subject of an Address to His Majesty protesting against the resolutions in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, which were carried last year in both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament.

2. The Address has been laid before the King, who has received with pleasure the assurances of loyalty contained in it.

I have, &c.,

ELGIN.

